DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 055 301 CG 006 685

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Drewniany, Henry F. |
| TITLE | Elementary School Guidance in Connecticut. Bulletin 114. |
| INSTITUTION | Connecticut State Dept. of Education, Hartford. |
| PUB DATE | 70 |
| NOTE | 51p. |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29 |
| DESCRIPTORS | Counseling; Counselor Role; *Elementary School Counselors; *Elementary School Guidance; *Elementary School Students; Exceptional Children; Guidance; Guidance Programs; *Models; *Pupil Personnel Services; Students |
| IDENTIFIERS | Connecticut |

ABSTRACT

This publication focuses on diversity and presents a general model of elementary school guidance programs that is responsive to the need for diverse programs. Five elementary school guidance programs are described. These were arbitrarily selected from communities represented on the Advisory Committee on Elementary School Guidance Services in Connecticut. The authors hope that these 5 programs will serve to show how certain urban, suburban, and rural communities have responded to the guidance needs of their children. The general model presented grew out of a careful consideration of the common threads running through these programs and from the recommendations of the advisory committee as to what might constitute a model program. The focus of this model is on the importance of early identification and prevention of learning problems of all children. Of primary concern is the effective school placement of exceptional children. (Author)

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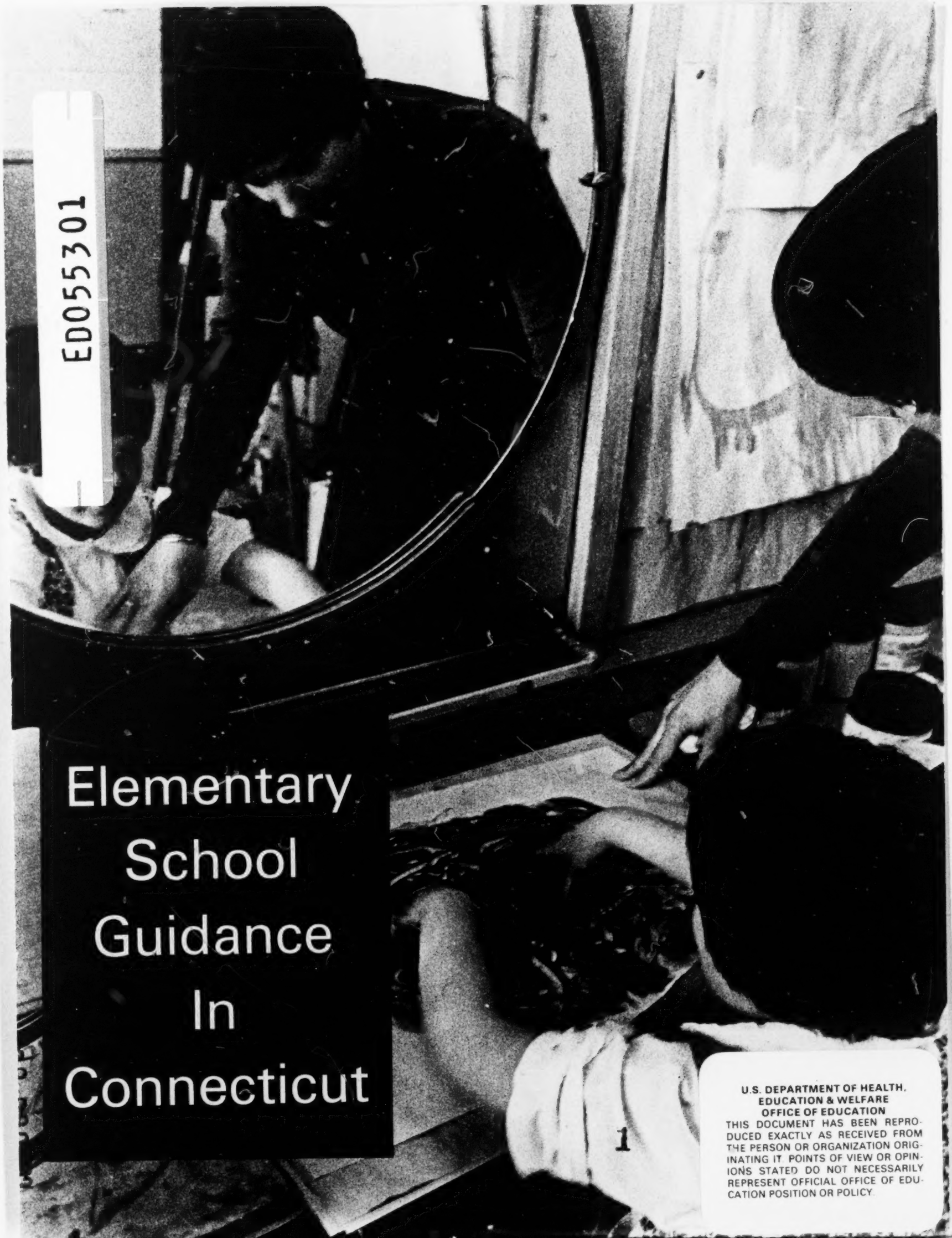

# Elementary School Guidance In Connecticut

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# Elementary School Guidance In Connecticut

Prepared by
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With the Assistance of
The Advisory Committee on Elementary School
Guidance Services in Connecticut

Bulletin 114 □ 1970

Connecticut State Department of Education

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# Preface

In recent years, Connecticut has witnessed a steady growth of elementary school guidance programs. In 1956-57, the full-time elementary school counselor equivalent stood at 20. During the 1969-70 school year, 59 school systems employed 199 full or part-time guidance counselors at the elementary and/or middle school levels. Thirty-one were also qualified psychological examiners who carried the dual responsibility of bringing psychological services as well as counseling services to their schools.

The need for elementary school guidance services was well-established in the mid-1950's. At that time, this need received considerable attention from Connecticut educators. In 1955, directors of guidance and/or pupil services, counselor educators, and State Department of Education consultants for guidance services issued a position paper, "How about the Elementary School Counselor?," which included the following concept of guidance:

*In the final analysis, the "guidance point of view" may be synonymous with other popular movements in education that attempt to place greater emphasis upon identifying pupil characteristics and meeting individual needs. In essence, it may be the "child centered" point of view which places the individual and the "leading out process" in focus. It may be the 'mental hygiene point of view' with its emphasis upon assisting the development of the well-integrated personality. It is a translation into action of the principles of "psychology of individual differences" and "levels of challenge" with the implications they hold for the entire educational process. It is the "democratic point of view" in education with its concern for dignity and the worth of the individual and his individuality. In reality, it is all of these points of view and others which hold that the individual must be the chief basis of concern and attention. Combined they recognize that children are different in every respect and must be "guided" in the light of this; that children have fundamental needs and that among these needs the personal and social categories are of prime importance during the elementary school years. This point of view, whatever one may choose to call it, is reflected in the school when the teacher teaches individuals as well as subject matter; when she is alert to the different learning rates among her pupils and adjusts accordingly; when she is sensitive to symptoms of social and personal maladjustment and does something constructive about them; when she is concerned with the total personality structure and development of each individual boy and girl.*

*The "guidance point of view," then, is inherent in modern education concepts and teaching practices. Ultimately, the phrase "guidance point of view in teaching" must give way to just "teaching," for if the art of teaching itself does not incorporate this point of view it will have little to distinguish, dignify, or commend it.*

In 1965, following an extension of the National Defense Education Act's Title V-A to the elementary school level, Connecticut established the position of consultant for elementary school guidance services. With the support of state consultative services and federal funding, a number of school systems proceeded to develop programs designed to meet their special needs. Concern with local priorities has resulted in a high degree of diversity among programs throughout the state.

This publication focuses on diversity and presents a general model that is responsive to the need for diverse programs. No attempt has been made to attain a broad sampling, for such was not our original objective.

The five programs described were arbitrarily selected from communities represented on the Advisory Committee on Elementary School Guidance Services in Connecticut. Hopefully, they will serve to show how certain urban, suburban, and rural communities have responded to the guidance needs of their children.

The model presented grew out of a careful consideration of the common threads running through a variety of programs and from the recommendations of the advisory committee as to what might constitute a model program. The focus is on the importance of early identification and prevention of learning problems of all children. Of primary concern is the effective school placement of exceptional children.

As with any guide toward successful structure, the model should not be viewed rigidly but as one more effort to develop an emerging program—a program which most certainly will be altered by the course of future elementary school needs.



"Concern with individual differences among pupils requires that educators recognize the values of diversity and minimize the pressures toward a uniformity that destroys individual development. Only in this way can the potential of students be realized and only through individual development can society progress. Although the school is an agent of social change, it is equally a preserver of society. Desirable social change emerges when the members of a society have a background of knowledge and an ability to think critically and creatively, using knowledge and understanding to make thought productive. A society is preserved when its members are able to understand its values and to develop individual values which are consonant with the best purposes of that society. The schools are a major social agency through which these purposes can be achieved."

*Pupil Personnel Services—A Position Statement,* National Association of Pupil Personnel Administrators, April, 1969

# Introduction

**Guidance is an Essential Component of Modern Education.**

"Human beings from an early age have more capacity for learning to face and to understand and to deal constructively with the realities of life than we have hitherto assumed in our psychological theories or in our educational practices . . . we encourage the desire to learn about self and others and try to fill this desire by developing a program to promote wholesome understanding of self and others as a basic feature of the general education of all children."[1]

Significant trends have developed with respect to psychological theories and educational practices. With the emergence of the behavioral sciences and their impact upon social welfare, child rearing and education, childhood experience is seen as having great import in determining the course of one's life as an adult. A major thrust in this regard has been the evolution of developmental and preventive guidance practices in the elementary school. Recent events have brought the nation's attention to the waste of human resources and have led to a new urgency for vigorous implementation of guidance services at the elementary school level.

Currently, guidance is often seen as an enabling process with three distinct dimensions:

1—To enable each child to discover in himself a person of dignity and worth.

2—To enable each child to develop satisfying human relationships necessary for effective learning and living.

3—To enable each child to experience a feeling of success in subject matter achievement in terms of his potential.

The search for an appropriate model geared to meet the unique needs of contemporary elementary schools should begin with a deep concern for these three dimensions of the enabling process.

**Guidance Services Are for All Children**

A model for an elementary guidance program must promote the integrity of the individual and foster the development of individuality as a positive force in the educational process.

Children are individuals and differ in their individuality. Some of these differences enhance functioning; some serve to impair functioning. Giftedness, talent potential and special abilities require discovery, identification, stimulation, and opportunity for expression. Learning disabilities, emotional handicaps, and other educational problems are not modified without special education.

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[1] Jersild, Arthur T., presidential address to the American Psychological Association, 1960.

### Guidance Is Part of a Coordinated Team Effort

The implementation of a guidance model is the responsibility and concern of the entire school staff. A large number of communities in Connecticut are involved in developing elementary guidance and child development services. Many patterns for implementation have emerged, reflecting the multifaceted nature of guidance services and creating the need for coordination. Programs that emerge will be determined by the specific type of community, be it urban, rural, or suburban.

Together, the instructional, administrative, and guidance models must project an atmosphere of love, respect, and purpose. Teachers and parents play central roles in the nurturing of children. In giving its support, the school directs the efforts of a coordinated team of specially trained persons: counselors, psychologists, social workers, remedial teachers, physicians, and nurses.

Thus, all the resources of the school are brought to bear to assist children, parents, and teachers to make the most of a child's developmental experiences. Further, these resources should motivate a strong sense of inquiry through which a well integrated self will be properly nurtured. Finally, it is the classroom teachers who must play key guidance roles in the elementary school.

In this regard the following questions should be asked by the school staff:

1—How does the teacher view and understand children?
2—What is the teacher able and willing to do?



### The Focus Should Be on Child

It is implicit that understanding and acceptance by others leads the child to accept himself and to move forward, to become self-directive and self-enhancing. Our ultimate goal should be the development of a flexible, honest, free, perceptive, integrative, and creative self image for each child. The dynamic interaction between the teacher and the child must be the primary dimension of the model.

"... education should make way for peak experiences ... raw, concrete, esthetic experiences, especially of subjective happenings inside oneself ... these experiences are integrative, combining observation, insight and feeling, and helping to validate life learnings. They should be treated, not as peripheral, but as central to education."[2]

This publication is devoted to an examination and description of the specialized efforts of several Connecticut school systems to provide for elementary school children appropriate preventative and developmental guidance services.

In addition, a skeletal model for elementary school guidance services is presented. It is hoped that persons concerned with the development of elementary school guidance programs will find the descriptions and the suggested model helpful as they initiate new programs or restructure those already established.

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[2] *Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming: A New Focus for Education,* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Yearbook, 1962, p. 224.

# Elementary Guidance Programs In Connecticut

## *A Survey of Current Practices*

Mounting evidence points to a rapid increase in guidance and counseling services in the nation's elementary schools. A recent national survey by the U.S. Office of Education determined that almost 13,000—or one-fourth of the nation's elementary schools with enrollment over 100—were employing child development consultants.[1]

In 1968, an effort was made by the advisory committee to determine the nature of elementary guidance programs in Connecticut and further to determine the extent to which elementary guidance counselors were being used to implement the three basic functions of elementary guidance. The purpose of this section of this report is to summarize the findings of that survey. These findings are followed by a qualitative description of five programs.

**Survey Focus and Intent**

The main focus of this report is on elementary school guidance in its more limited sense. Nevertheless, results relating to guidance services in a broader context—services involving personnel other than counselors—are included so that the major findings of the survey may be shared.

[1]Child development consultants, as defined in the survey, included counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers who spent at least an average of one day a week in any one of the schools included in the survey.

It should be noted further that the advisory committee's survey was designed to reflect the current status of elementary guidance programs. Such reflection does not imply endorsement of the status quo. The last section of this report presents directions toward which program developers might move in their attempt to design more effective guidance services.

**Response**

Principals of 374 elementary schools out of approximately 900 (42 percent) responded to an advisory committee questionnaire. Of the 374 schools responding, 176 (47 percent) responded affirmatively to the question, "Do you have an elementary school guidance program?" See Figure A, Page 8.

They also reported a variety of professionals as being involved to widely divergent degrees, and often in overlapping relationships, in the implementation of the broad functions of elementary school guidance—counseling, coordinating, and consulting. See Figure B, Page 8, and Figures C and D, Page 9.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of School _____ Person Reporting _____

Town/City _____ Title or Position _____

1. Do you have an elementary school guidance program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Who serves to implement your guidance services at the elementary level?

☐ Teacher ☐ Psychological Examiner
☐ Principal ☐ School Nurse
☐ School Social Worker ☐ Counselor
☐ School Psychologist ☐ Other - Please specify _____

3. What elementary guidance functions do you have and who carries the responsibility for their implementation? Identify by checking on the grid (1) the professional specialist carrying responsibility and (2) specific function. More than one check may be appropriate in a given column.

| | *Counseling Function | | | Consultative Function | | | | Coordinating Function | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pupils | Teachers | Parents | Parents | Teachers | Admin. | Community Personnel | In-School | With Community |
| Principal | | | | | | | | | |
| Teacher | | | | | | | | | |
| Elem. Counselor | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Worker | | | | | | | | | |
| Psych. Examiner | | | | | | | | | |
| Sch. Psychologist | | | | | | | | | |
| Nurse | | | | | | | | | |
| Other (Specify) | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

*Counseling is herein defined as a process of interaction in which an individual is given the opportunity to explore his attitudes and behavior to acquire insight leading to more effective self direction.

**FIGURE A**—*In 1968, this three-part questionnaire was mailed by the Advisory Committee on Elementary School Guidance Services in Connecticut to all principals of public elementary schools in the state. All told, 374 principals—42 percent of the total—responded to the survey. Of this number, 176—or 47 percent—reported that their schools had guidance programs.*

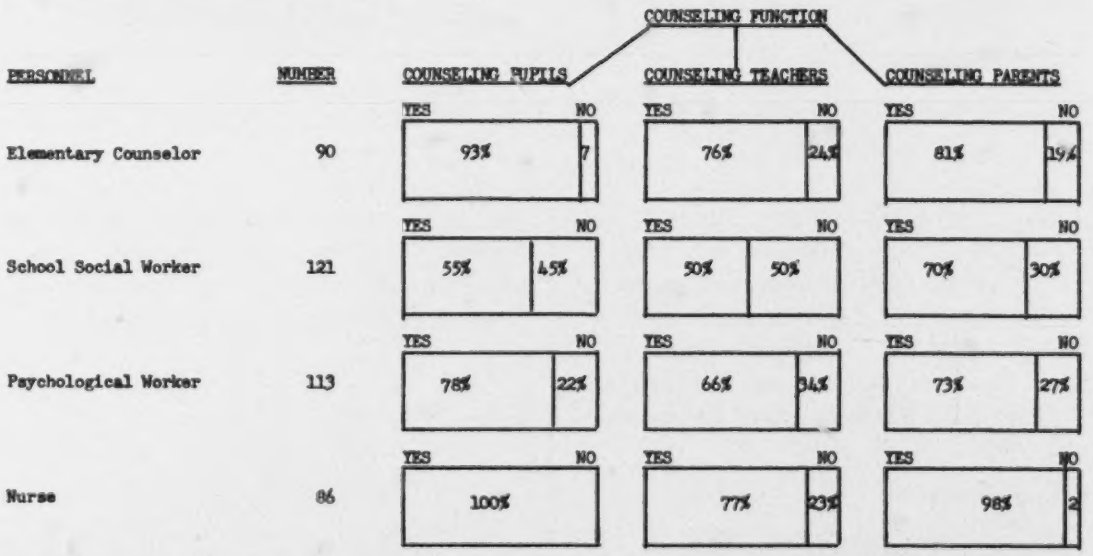


**FIGURE B**—*This breakdown of survey responses shows to what extent professional counselors, social workers, psychological personnel, and school nurses were involved in counseling pupils, teachers, and parents. In schools employing them, school nurses were reported to be the busiest "advisers" of all pupil personnel workers.*

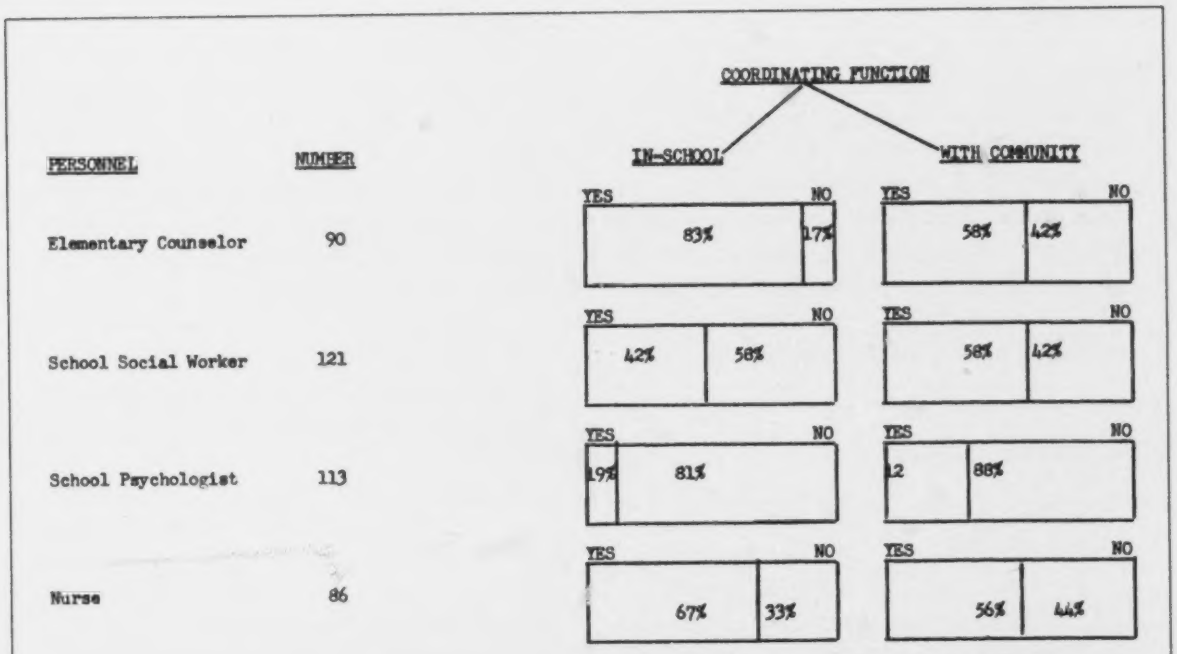


**FIGURE C**—*Another analysis of survey returns revealed that counselors in elementary schools were more frequently involved in coordinating guidance activities than were any of the other three classifications of pupil personnel professionals. The survey also revealed that principals did more coordinating of both in-school and school-community activities than anyone else.*

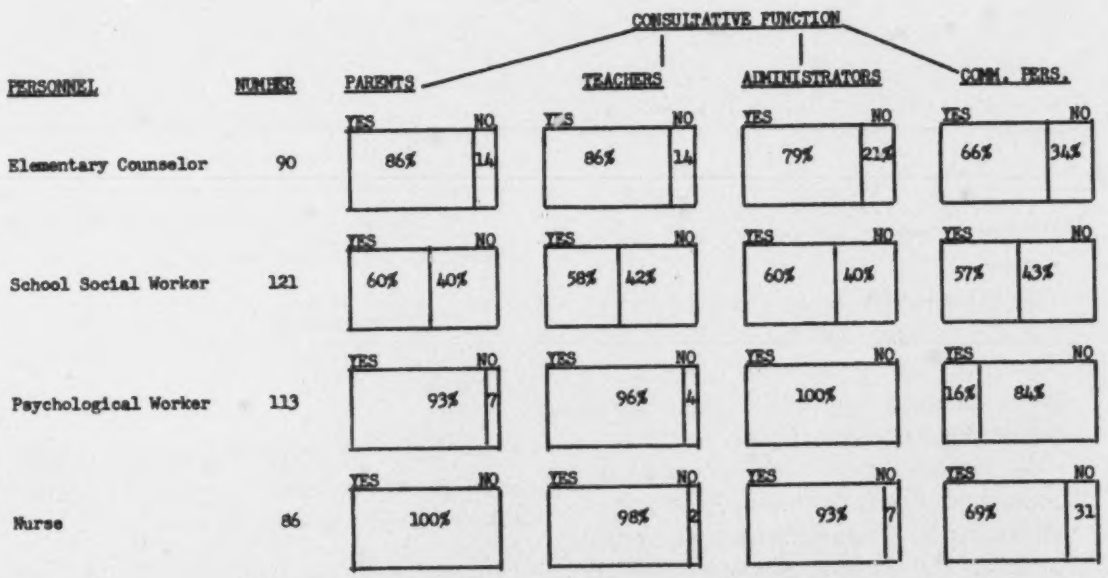


**FIGURE D**—*Consultative services to parents, teachers, administrators, and local citizens require a high degree of expertise. This demanding function, the survey revealed, was performed more often by principals than by other professional staff members. Among pupil personnel workers, school nurses—in the 86 schools employing same—did more consultative work than did counselors, social workers, or psychological personnel.*

**Findings**

Principals indicated that, in general, counseling of children, consulting with teachers and parents, and coordinating inschool and community activities, are overlapping functions and that principals, teachers, elementary counselors, school social workers, psychological personnel, and school nurses are all engaged to some extent in guidance activities.

**Counseling Function**

In 176 schools specified as having guidance programs, principals reported:

1—They and teachers are very frequently involved in counseling pupils and parents. Seven out of ten principals were counseling pupils and parents. Teachers were counseling pupils in approximately seven out of ten cases and were counseling parents in six out of ten situations.

2—All pupil personnel workers included in the survey are involved to varying degrees in counseling pupils, teachers, and parents.

a. School nurses counsel pupils and parents in nearly all schools employing nurses.

b. Psychological personnel (psychological examiners and school psychologists) counsel pupils and parents in approximately eight out of ten schools employing such workers.

c. School social workers counsel parents in approximately seven out of ten schools employing school social workers and counsel pupils in approximately six out of ten schools.

d. Elementary counselors counsel pupils in approximately nine out of ten schools employing elementary school counselors and counsel parents in approximately eight out of ten schools.

**Coordinating Function**

In 176 elementary schools specified as having guidance programs, principals reported themselves most frequently involved in coordinating both in school and school-community guidance activities. For various pupil personnel workers, the principals reported:

1—Elementary counselors are most frequently involved in coordinating in school guidance activities.

2—A similarity exists in the frequency with which school social workers, school nurses, and elementary school counselors are involved in coordinating school-community guidance functions.

3—A high degree of involvement of school nurses exists in coordinating in school and school-community functions.

**Consultative Function**

In the same 176 elementary schools, principals reported the consultative function of their guidance programs involves them more frequently than any other professional staff member.

For various pupil personnel workers, the principals reported:

1—School nurses are most often involved in the consulting function with parents.

2—School nurses, psychological workers and elementary counselors consult most frequently with teachers.

3—Psychological workers and nurses consult most frequently with administrators.

4—School nurses, counselors, and school social workers are actively involved in consulting with personnel outside the school.

**Questions in Search of Answers**

1—Since a wide variety of school personnel counsels pupils, how can it be determined who should develop such a relationship with a given student?

2—Since principals report themselves as coordinating guidance activities what provisions are made to distinguish guidance from administrative services in the school?

3—What distinguishes the need for psychological workers and nurses to consult with administrators in almost 100 percent of the responding schools, when only four out of five elementary counselors serve in such a capacity?

4—Why don't pupil services as a whole provide a consultative service with community personnel a higher percentage of time than the 57-69 percent reported?

5—Is the reported counseling function with teachers a realistic function for pupil personnel workers, particularly when 50-77 percent of the personnel are reported involved with this activity?

6—Is the historic position of the nurse as the first pupil personnel worker in the elementary school the reason nurses are involved most frequently in the surveyed guidance functions?

Related to the preceding are the following questions and conclusions growing out of the Research Conference on Elementary School Guidance conducted at Southern State College, Magnolia, Arkansas, in 1965:

1. *What is the best administrative organizational plan for various sized school systems?* A report from the Interprofessional Research Commission on Pupil Personnel Practices suggests the need to investigate certain organizational patterns: "Pupil personnel service programs follow three basic patterns: specialists responsible to a full-time director of pupil personnel services; specialists responsible to an assistant superintendent with responsibilities in addition to pupil services; and senior specialists who coordinate the work of their associates and report directly to the superintendent of schools. An evaluation of these differently organized pupil services programs for comparable population areas is needed. At the present time, there is little research to indicate which patterns of organization are more effective."

2. *What is the most effective assignment pattern for school guidance personnel?* Recognizing the specific functions of the guidance personnel in a school setting — preventive, consultative, corrective, coordinative, and developmental — it is important that assignment patterns be analyzed to determine whether certain functions are impaired or enhanced by the pattern used. Such patterns include: full-time versus part-time guidance responsibilities, school-based personnel versus itinerant personnel serving more than one school versus centrally based personnel on call to schools, and assignments to perform specialized services such as evaluation and diagnosis, parent counseling, consultation, or other singular guidance activities.

3. *How can we obtain the optimum staffing pattern for the total school program?* It is possible to establish extensive, sophisticated programs of special services at the expense of the regular instructional programs of a school. To utilize a disproportionate share of the personnel positions available in a school system for non-instructional functions could lead to the development of a program wherein overloaded, overtaxed, anxious teachers may create more problems than even an extensive clinical program can resolve. To determine the proper deployment of professional staff, studies should be conducted to compare various staffing patterns utilizing uniform staff-pupil ratios.

### *IN-SCHOOL OPERATION*

*Bethany's elementary guidance program centers on the school—the pupils and staff. Right, a counselor conducts a group counseling session to resolve a conflict involving the children in the group. Informality is the keynote of such sessions. Resource persons from the community often participate.*

*Below, counselor (right) confers with parents of child experiencing learning difficulties.*

# Bethany

## *A School-Oriented Program in a Small Town*

By Franklin P. Plummer

**Background**

A formalized guidance program made its first appearance in Bethany during the 1967-68 school year. Bethany is a small community. It has a single K-6 elementary school with a pupil enrollment range of 565 to 620.

There were, during the initial year of operation, 23 classroom teachers in the Bethany system. In addition to classroom teachers, the professional staff consisted of a superintendent-principal, a part-time speech therapist, a librarian, and a school nurse. Specialized pupil personnel services were non-existent prior to the employment of a guidance counselor.

Provisions for special services were debated by the board of education for some time before the adoption of a guidance program. As a direct result of these discussions, it was determined that a guidance program should be established in preference to a program of psychiatric social work or a school psychological program.

The determining factors were that the guidance program, more than any other, is a school-oriented program—a service to all pupils and staff, rather than to individual problem youngsters. In addition, the community had indicated in many ways that it was not ready for school programs which might involve home visitations.

**Specific Duties and Responsibilities**

Individual Inventory Service. Proper maintenance and development of the individual inventory for each child comes under the supervision of the guidance director. The director is responsible for the organization of cumulative record materials into functional form and for the determination of items to be included. The organization of a valid record-keeping system for the school has involved consultation with the principal and a guidance committee consisting of staff members.

Testing Program. The guidance director is responsible for the coordination, administration, and interpretation of the testing program. A well-ordered testing program has been initiated throughout the grades. Several types of tests are included. Intelligence, personality, and achievement tests are given individually and only to those students for whom they seem specifically indicated.

The guidance director, in conference with the principal, selects the time of the test administration and the method of scoring the tests.

The interpretation of tests becomes the responsibility of the guidance director. He is available to the staff and to parents in order to interpret test results. The director also insures that test results are included and kept up-to-date in the student inventory files.

Information Service. The director, in conjunction with the librarian, acquires information needed by young people for the solution of individual problems that are not dealt with in any of the formal aspects of academic study.

A social behavior file, though not labeled as such, helps provide for the fulfillment of these needs. Information comes from magazines, newspapers, books, films, filmstrips, and speakers. The material is made known to the staff, and assistance is given to the teachers in the use of the information. The director is also in charge of obtaining audiovisual aids for use in the classroom.

Follow-Up Service. The follow-up service is a research undertaking by the guidance director which involves keeping in touch with graduates for several years after leaving school. This includes working in close cooperation with the administration and guidance staff of Bethany Junior High School and Amity Regional High School.

There are two fundamental purposes for the follow-up service. One is to find further opportunities for serving the student. The second is to determine the influence and value of the program as it relates to the improvement of the school.

More specifically, the following aims are also included:

1—To determine to what extent the school program meets the needs of the students according to their own evaluation.

2—To determine if any improvements are needed in the testing program.

3—To determine whether or not the curriculum should be changed.

4—To evaluate the overall atmosphere of the school.

Use of Community Resources. It is the guidance director's function to utilize the resources of the community in the instruction and guidance of our students.

Community resources include any individual or group available as a source of information or service. They also include field trips, special assemblies, donations of materials, and individual speakers for individual classrooms, when what the speaker has to offer pertains to the needs of the class and/or individual and as these needs relate to the guidance program.

Group guidance. The group guidance program deals with problems common to elementary school youth rather than to individuals.

The group guidance classes are usually conducted in an informal manner, allowing not only for group projects and group participation, but also for using outsiders as resource persons. Some areas of concern: student orientation, student personal adjustments, social information, study habits, and better understanding of human relations.

Individual Counseling and Group Counseling. The individual counseling service offers direct assistance to the individual through face-to-face relationships and also works with, and through, the parents of the pupils. The group counseling service involves groups of six to eight children with similar problems which do not apply to a larger group as is the case in group guidance classes. Students are referred to the guidance counselor by homeroom teachers, the administration—at the request of pupils or parents.

Referral Service. In general there are two types of referrals: (1) those in which referrals are made to the counselor, and (2) those in which the counselor makes outside referrals of students whose problems are beyond the scope of the counselor's competencies.

Referrals come to the counselor from homeroom teachers, administrators, parents, physicians, and law enforcement officers. Test results are also used as a means of evaluating and determining which students are in need of assistance or special classes.

Outside referrals include medical, psychiatric, clinical, and parent referral. The guidance director has made a careful survey of resources inside and outside the community to ascertain which resources are available to the school. Referrals are made with the administration's and parents' knowledge and consent.

Orientation Program. The chief concern of the orientation program is with two periods in the educational program at Bethany Community School. One is the kindergarten period. The other is the period between elementary and junior high school. The work is carried out as group guidance except in the case of individual students entering school by transfer.

A tour of the junior high is conducted during the last month of school so that students can become familiar with physical aspects of the school. Counselors and administrators from the junior high participate by giving talks to the sixth-graders at an assembly. In group guidance classes, discussions are held on junior high regulations, on course offerings, and on extracurricular activities. Parents also are invited to orientation programs.

Parents with children about to enter kindergarten visit the kindergarten in the spring. The visit includes talks by the nurse, dental hygienist, kindergarten teachers, and the principal. The children are allowed to visit the classroom and participate in activities in order to become acquainted with the room and the activities of the group. During registration, the kindergarten teacher holds conferences with parents, and the children can again be in the classroom before regular classes are held.

Assistance to Staff, Administration and Parents. The guidance director assists each teacher in making ability-achievement studies for the class and a sociometric study of each class.

The director reviews with the teacher all of the student cumulative record folders, including health records and other pertinent materials. He helps the teacher plan for individual students, especially where there are needs for further challenge, for extending remedial work into the classroom, for coordinating the health program, for classroom help with personal-social adjustment, and for an approach to other problems which may develop.

Guidance folders have been put on file. Information in the folders is made available to homeroom teachers if needed in solving student problems.

The guidance director also assists in curriculum planning, the grouping of children, and, when necessary, in parent-teacher conferences.

**Personnel**

Our initial intention was to employ only one guidance counselor, but it became immediately necessary to expand our program to include a part-time (three hours per week) psychological examiner. The examiner is responsible to the guidance counselor. The counselor screens and approves requests for individual psychological examinations. The counselor and the examiner meet with parents and teachers to explain the results of the testing, to answer questions, and to recommend any necessary course of action.

The guidance counselor has sole responsibility for all referrals, requests for further services, and/or necessary program modification.

The first year, the counselor concentrated on individual counseling, improvement of permanent records, coordination of the group testing program, and assistance to staff, administration, and personnel.

From the beginning, there was total agreement between the guidance counselor and the principal that all problems involving learning, attitudes, and social emotional development of all pupils would be the immediate province of the guidance counselor. Discipline, per se, is the province and responsibility of the principal and not a part of the guidance counselor's role. The rationale is that children should feel free to come to the counselor without the fear that might exist if the counselor were the disciplinarian.

Staff meetings are held periodically and teachers are instructed on both methods and reasons for referral of pupils to the guidance counselor.

**Problems**

Problems in the Bethany Elementary School are the same as those found anywhere. Some relate to ineffectual use of standardized testing, improper recording and utilization of permanent records, learning difficulties of individual pupils, coordination of the school program, and a greater need to impart to the professional staff a better understanding of pupil personnel problems. Also, there is a definite need for additional space with adequate privacy for counseling as well as space for pupils to browse and to work.

Community understanding of these needs and the type of program desired is also a need that is being met through the use of newsletters to townspeople and by discussion at public meetings.

**Administrative and Organization**

No noticeable administrative problems marked the first year of operation. Some difficulty was experienced in getting teachers to utilize properly the services of the guidance counselors. It might be noted that the guidance counselor must be extremely discreet, especially in a small town. Children talk about teachers and parents with great abandonment and, in some instances, it is necessary to seek consultation with a trained child psychiatrist. In one instance, consultation was held with juvenile authorities.

It is essential that definitive plans be made and that definite policies on the administration and organization of the guidance program be developed. These plans must set forth the roles of all professionals in the program.

**Evaluation**

In evaluating the program, it is first necessary to admit that, as a new program with limited personnel, it was too ambitious. The major emphasis, as mentioned, was on individual and small group counseling, referral services, the overall standardized testing program, and assistance to staff, administration, and parents.

It also became obvious that more clerical assistance was needed.

On the plus side, many problems which had been bothering the professional staff were recognized and remedial action was begun.

Better grade placement of present and incoming students now takes place. Teachers are reinforced and supported regarding retention and promotion. Parents are happy with being able to confer with a person who is trained and who is concerned primarily with children. The board of education is better informed through more detailed and accurate reports concerning testing.

The guidance department at Amity Regional Junior High School has cooperated in exchanging information which has resulted in better placement of Bethany pupils and hence better achievement by pupils.

Study of test results, as well as consideration of the results of parent and pupil counseling, has resulted in improvement in the school curriculum.

All in all, the guidance program has become an integral and accepted part of the Bethany elementary school program.

The administration and the board of education are still convinced that their original decision to begin special services with a guidance program was correct. The professional staff has concurred and has requested an expansion of the present program.

**Future of the Movement**

Bethany continues to expand. The construction of a second school on the same site will provide the area needed for special services.

During 1969-70, the guidance director served as the head of a pupil personnel services team which evaluates pupils for special services. In addition, a psychologist is available two days a week. Funds to provide consultation from a psychiatrist also have been budgeted. A full-time special education teacher, who works with youngsters in a resource room, has also been employed.

Upon completion of the new building, two special rooms will be utilized for special classes.

Plans call for these programs to be under the guidance director who will coordinate all special services.

In addition, continued budgeting and long-term planning are resulting in acquisition of materials and program improvement. These should lead toward the attainment of the ten goals listed.

### *SPECIAL HELP FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT*

*In Fairfield, elementary school counselors serve in dual capacity of counselor-examiner. Above, a counselor-examiner (left) and a special education tutor counsel child needing kindly, expert help. New stress on special education for handicapped is placing heavy load on existing guidance staff.*

*Left, youngster strives toward successful completion of a project in a relaxed setting, free of distraction. In the Fairfield elementary schools, play is recognized as a natural medium of self-expression.*

# Fairfield

## *Counselors Work as Members of Team*

By Myrna Frank Gould

**Background**

The increasing use of the services of guidance counselors in the elementary schools in Connecticut and in the nation is seen as a significant development in improving the effectiveness of education.

A Science Research Associates report of the late 1950's observed that most youngsters who become social misfits have been unsuccessful and dissatisfied in school. It emphasized the need to approach this problem in early elementary school. Other reports also point to the failure of many individuals to realize their potential primarily because of personality factors. These reports say the best opportunity for modification of basic patterns is in the early formative years.

**Purpose**

It is a well-recognized principle that there is a two-way relationship between personality factors and academic success in school. Stresses often interfere with optimum academic development. School difficulties often result in a loss of confidence which can damage or interfere with the development of vigorous emotional health in the child.

When the child enters school with, or develops in school, various adjustment problems, these interfere with school achievement and satisfactory relationships. There is a vicious cycle effect. If the school does not concern itself with the development of personalities that are healthy and effective, it finds itself the instrument of negative effects on the child.

The development of diagnostic and guidance techniques with young children has made it possible for the psychologically trained elementary school counselor to make contributions to the total school program. The elementary school guidance counselor serves as an integral member of the faculty of the school in which he is working.

Where needs are revealed, the counselor helps teachers to plan for each individual student concerning educational remediation or tutorial services—whether as extension of services into the classroom or coordination with other school specialists on speech, reading, health needs or personal-social adjustment.

**Personnel: Job Description and Responsibilities**

Previously, each counselor was assigned to two schools. The goal is one counselor per elementary school with 500-600 pupils enrolled. The elementary counselor shares with administrators and teachers a responsibility for the developmental-educational guidance of every pupil in the school.

| | |
|---|---|
| Educational Guidance –Total School | 25% |
| Personal–Social–School Guidance | 50% |
| Parent Counseling | 15% |
| Psychological Studies | 10% |

The counselor assists the teacher in making an ability-achievement study through class record sheets each year. The counselor reviews cumulative record folders and records of special services—i.e., speech or reading previously offered, especially where pupils are new to the school.

Where special needs are identified and facts are lacking, guidance planning between teacher and counselor is described in writing to enable evaluation and follow-up activity.

It seems that the greatest preventative opportunities are found in working with primary grade groups. In the upper grades, we observe the effect of modified behavior through peer-interaction and the opportunity to express one's feelings.

Since play is the natural medium of self-expression, a variety of materials and activities is used in a half-hour period once a week in the guidance room.

The counselor works directly with pupils in activity group guidance, using group counseling techniques, as well as in individual counseling. Through small-group peer interaction, children are helped to recognize, face, clarify, and resolve some of the problems that interfere with their success in school.

Parents are notified by mail when children are referred to activity group guidance in a form-letter developed in the experimental program. They are invited to confer with the counselor and may refuse the program offered.

From such parent-counselor conferences, a series of parent counseling sessions may be developed if indicated and desired by the parent.

Psychological studies may be used in a limited number of cases when further exploration toward helping the child is indicated. As a result of these studies, additional services may be provided within the school setting—e.g., supplementary tutoring or special education classes—or parents may be referred to outside agencies and/or private professional services as the studies suggest more than ordinary educational needs.

**Problems**

Fairfield's problems are similar to those felt on the larger scene and reflect the issue of change. We, too, are concerned with emphasis on child development as well as teaching preparation and expect more psychological training, since Fairfield counselors function in the dual capacity of counselor-examiner.

We regularly feel the need to review and redefine our role in order to work better with staff as members of the team. They want to know who we are, what we do, and what services we can be expected to provide.

Mandates to provide special education pose additional problems. Varied programs are being established to meet the needs of exceptional children—trainable-educable curriculum, socially and emotionally disturbed, perceptually handicapped, specific learning disabilities, etc.

Counselors find it difficult to meet these increased demands in view of the large number of pupils assigned to them. Increased time seems essential in view of newer requests for a prescriptive programing focus on psychological referrals to special education, plus a need for increased counseling contact with the families of pupils so referred.

Debates involving the role and responsibility of the public school continue. They reflect many unresolved issues behind the guidance program. The function of guidance as articulating education by "enabling" children has not yet been uniformly accepted. The elementary counselor is defined as a member of a pupil personnel team which strives to prevent problems and to facilitate the learning of each child. But this is still a paper definition to some administrators and teachers.

A booklet describing the Fairfield guidance program is being developed to provide more effective communication with the hope of promoting better understanding and acceptance of the program.

Administrative and Organization Problems Encountered—The administrator of each school is responsible for the implementation of the guidance program. The school principal should initiate supervisory activity where needed or appropriate.

Consultant services are available for assistance in program development and improvement. The consultant for guidance and psychological services meets with and provides regular weekly consultation for each guidance counselor. And he arranges monthly meetings of the K-12 staff.

Administrative responsibility for the total program rests with the assistant superintendent.

A supervisor of special education has been appointed who is responsible for programs for the exceptional child (Section 10-76 of General Statutes) and who supervises homebound instruction, tutorial programs, and special class (adjusted curriculum, perceptually handicapped, learning disabilities) assignments as necessary.

Counselor—Examiners are expected to provide help in screening and testing as needed for school surveys and studies of individual pupils for the supervisor of special education services—and in communicating with the home and counseling of parents toward accepting special education.

**Evaluation**

Broad policy planning and program evaluation are a function of the committee on elementary guidance, consisting of principals, counselors, the consultant for guidance and psychological services, and the assistant superintendent.

A teacher check list was prepared in the late 1950's to assess teacher responses to the then experimental elementary guidance program. Most teachers surveyed indicated growth and improved behavior. Few teachers indicated no change.

The personal comments written by the teachers were more positive than the quantitative data derived from the check list. Teachers commented on lessened negative and destructive behavior and increased evidence of self-control and desirable group behavior. Improvement was also noted in academic areas and in peer relations.

Internally, each school refers children to guidance as a team effort of counselor, teacher, and principal. A mid-year evaluation of the current groups takes place with the result that the program is concluded for some pupils, while others are brought into it.

After an in-depth study of our guidance program, the League of Women Voters contributed to the evaluation process with a written recommendation that Fairfield improve its communication with the town by preparing a booklet describing our current guidance program.



**Future of the Movement**

The State Department of Education has pointed to the increased need for effective intervention during the elementary school years. It notes the multitude of social problems: increased mobility, pressure for academic success regarding entrance to colleges, growing dropout rates, and delinquent behavior among the school-age population.

Connecticut School Counselor Association publications quote the state education department's comparison of 1953-54 when 48 elementary counselors were employed as contrasted with 109 counselors in 1967-68.

CSCA has supported the view that the growth in the number of elementary counselors underscores an emerging awareness among school superintendents and boards of education that all elementary school children are, at one time or another, faced with problems which are more intelligently resolved with the assistance of a competent counselor.

As a result of its evaluation study, the Fairfield school system recommended that guidance services be provided for all elementary schools, with a pupil load ranging from 750 to 1000 pupils.

It is hoped that staff will be increased so that there will be one elementary counselor for each school by the mid-1970's. To date, Fairfield has two of eight elementary counselors assigned to a single school.

In view of state legislation requiring provision for exceptional children, it is hoped that additional psychologically trained personnel will be added to the school staff to meet additional needs.

# *Fairfield's Activity-Group Guidance Program*

Elementary school children who are less than comfortable and successful with respect to behavior appropriate for their age, to peer relationships, and to academic achievement as compared with ability, are candidates for guidance in activity groups. Guidance at the elementary level attempts to promote overall educational success through the process of non-directive counseling and peer-group interaction.

Teachers play a critical role in observing and identifying those children about whom they are concerned or about whom they would like to raise questions. Although guidance referrals usually originate with the teacher, they may also be the result of parent, administrator and counselor participation.

Guidance asks of each classroom teacher: Who are your quiet, too shy children? Which children seem aggressive on the playground in their play? Is that bright pupil under pressure "to produce" or "get grades"? How comfortable is the child with limited academic skill? Is there someone who seems to need more than regular classroom attention?

The counselor meets with each teacher in early fall and in the spring to discuss the class, to raise questions such as those above, and to pursue areas of interest and concern about the pupils.

Those children for whom the activity-group guidance program is potentially profitable are recommended as candidates for the program.

Parents are notified by letter or telephone of the school's desire to include a child in the program and are invited to confer with the school counselor. Parents may elect to refuse this service, however.

The children meet in the guidance room in small grade-level groups of two to five pupils. The playroom setting enables children to choose from a variety of materials such as toys and games. This setting lets children gain experiences and opportunities for expression needed in their development—for example, taking turns, paying attention, establishing controls, communicating with peers, and experiencing success.

In a few cases it becomes apparent that more than routine guidance is necessary. After a team conference, a psychological study may be recommended if a more thorough description of the strengths and weaknesses of the child is required.

The completed study is reviewed with the consultant for psychological services before any new plans are put forward by the school. Such a study may be the basis of a referral for supplementary tutoring, special education, and/or outside clinical or other professional help. All referrals require communication and cooperative planning with the home.

*PERSONALIZED APPROACH*

*Hartford recognizes need for guidance services during the early years, especially for the disadvantaged. Photos show wide variety of techniques and activities used to promote positive child growth and development in elementary schools of state's largest city.*

# Hartford

## *Aims Toward K-12 Program for All Children*

By Joseph W. Constantine

**Background**

The Hartford school system has for many years recognized the need for school counselors, particularly in grades 7 through 12. However, only within the past several years has the need for a preventive and developmental type of guidance program in the early school years received some recognition.

Based on the demonstrated need of all children, particularly disadvantaged children, for effective guidance at an earlier level than junior or senior high school, the board of education assumed the financial obligation for a K-6 guidance program at one of its schools located in the heart of a poverty stricken area.

In the last three years, experimental programs have been developed in two additional schools. It is our intention to determine the effectiveness of setting up these programs in other schools. As needs are identified, requests will be made for expansion of what will ultimately become an integrated and continuous K-12 guidance program.

**Purpose**

The purpose of an elementary guidance program is to provide both developmental and corrective services that promote positive child growth and development.

Often the problems and difficulties which youngsters encounter in grades 7-12 can be identified in the elementary grades. However, because of staff limitations, many of these advance warnings go unnoticed and untreated.

There are also youngsters who have no apparent difficulties but who are not benefiting as much as they should from school experience. Many high school students, as well as adults, are not leading lives as productive or as satisfying as they might be because they did not have opportunities to realize their full potential.

The elementary guidance program provides a resource person—the elementary school counselor—who can help teachers understand the subtleties of an individual child's behavior and who can further help the teacher provide that child with a personalized educational program in the hopes of promoting his growth in a positive manner.

The major emphasis in grades K-3 is working with parents and teachers in helping them to understand children, expecially in assisting children to function at educational and social levels commensurate with their levels of maturity.

Early identification of ability and current achievement levels is helping teachers to prepare material at the child's educational level. Interpreting to parents the results of tests and suggested ways of helping their children is most helpful to all concerned.

During grades 4-6, the counselor begins to do more individual work with pupils, again emphasizing the preventative approach, but at the same time recognizing areas in which pupils need remedial help. A continuance of the parent program initiated in the earlier grades is imperative, particularly in those cases where problems are indicated.

The elementary guidance program helps provide a consistent and developmental program of pupil personnel services at the K-6 level. To be sure, pupil personnel services were available at the elementary level prior to the arrival of the elementary counselor. But they were sometimes on an incidental basis.

The elementary counselor helps coordinate the availability of all pupil personnel services. He also provides his own expertise in counseling and child development.

A cooperative team approach is essential and requires the best efforts of the counselor in seeking out services needed by pupils. Early meetings with the school nurse, social worker, psychological examiner, reading consultant, and speech and hearing therapists lead to a healthy environment within which all can operate effectively for the benefit of pupils.



It should be kept in mind at all times that each of the specialists offers to all pupils suggestions for preventing problems and for obtaining remedial help. Use of the skills of each specialist is leading to great rewards for pupils.

**Specific Duties and Responsibilities**

The counselor remains familiar with pupil needs through individual and group contacts, cumulative records, observation, and consultation. He makes use of this information in assessing pupil appointments, aptutudes, and interests, and in working with pupils and parents in regard to future planning.

He consults with teachers in relation to individual children and makes use of teacher observations in his work with individual youngsters. He also helps to interpret significant data to teachers in trying to meet pupil needs.

He works with staff members in developing plans and programs to prevent learning problems and maladjustments.

He uses group guidance and counseling techniques where appropriate to achieve efficiency in dealing with problems common to different age groups.

He aids in the process of identification of special problems requiring the help of special service personnel, including the school social worker, psychologist, attendance worker, home instruction coordinator, teachers of classes for the physically handicapped and mentally retarded, and speech and hearing and reading specialists. He is familiar with the process of referral to these special services.

He participates in group conferences involving administrative and special services. He may be assigned to coordinate these group conferences. In this process the emphasis should be placed on a team approach.

He interprets pupil data to parents and seeks to enlist the cooperation of parents in making realistic plans.

He keeps confidential records of contacts with pupils and parents to provide an ongoing history of specific work done with children.

He keeps a monthly record of his work so that it can be reviewed periodically in order to make decisions concerning future development of the guidance program.

He aids in articulation between his school and the schools to which his pupils will eventually transfer.

He defines and conducts research projects aimed at evaluating and improving existing programs and showing the need for the initiation of new programs.

He keeps the principal informed of all activities initiated by the counselor.

**Problems**

Acceptance of the counselor by the elementary school faculty. There was some initial resistance to the elementary counselor on the part of teachers. It took approximately two years to overcome this resistance. Counselors reported the third year as undoubtedly the best year of the program. They then were seen as part of the faculty and were generally well accepted by the staff.

To overcome the early resistance, counselors had to make themselves indispensable to the elementary teachers. Counselors made a concentrated effort to be of whatever assistance they could to teachers and to keep teachers informed as to what the guidance program was trying to accomplish.

Priority of assigned responsibilities. Elementary counselors find that they spend most of their time working directly with children or as a consultant to teachers, other specialists, or parents.

The counselor's dilemma is determining which takes precedence—working with the children directly or functioning primarily as a consultant. It was finally decided the answer depends on the number of children the elementary counselor is expected to serve and the grade level at which he serves them.

An elementary counselor responsible for 800 children spends more time in a consultant role, whereas an elementary counselor responsible for 350 children can spend more time working directly with youngsters. Also, at grades K-3, the counselor is more of a consultant to teachers, parents, and specialists, whereas at grades 4-6 he does more individual work wherever numbers permit.

No administration and organizational problems of any significance were encountered.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation to date is based on what counselors are doing and what they are accomplishing as opposed to a statistical analysis of pass-fail data, dropout rates, grade distribution, and attitudinal changes. Eventually we hope to be able to do an evaluation based on both types of data.

**Major Accomplishments**

Here are excerpts from the 1967-68 annual guidance report submitted to the assistant superintendent of pupil personnel services:

Three counselors provided services in three elementary schools. Two of them provided services for grades K-6 and one provided services for fifth and sixth grades.

Besides counseling children and acting as resource persons for the classroom teachers, the three counselors were involved as chairmen of the school cultural committee. They were responsible for the screening and selection of the school's cultural programs, organizing parent study groups, serving on the school's pupil appraisal team, and initiating and maintaining positive school and community relationships through home contacts and attendance at community meetings.

Further, they aided in the placing of students new to the school and of those going on to the next grade and in interpreting tests to teachers, parents, and students. In short, the three elementary counselors provided a continuous and somewhat uniform application of pupil personnel services for all their counselees. Previously, services were available only to the students at the secondary level.

It should be noted that the three elementary counselors were responsible for identifying students for several programs. In most of the programs, recommendations had to be written so that students could participate.

Here are figures on programs and other counselor activities:

| Program | Barnard-Brown | Arsenal | Clark |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Hicut | 22 | 22 | |
| B. Children's Museum | 4 | 6 | |
| C. Elementary Principals' Program | 8 | 17 | |
| D. Summer School Art Scholarship | 2 | | |
| E. Neighborhood Youth Corps | | 8 | |
| F. Project Co-op | | 65 | |
| G. Catholic High School Summer Program | | 15 | 6 |
| H. Westminster and Ethel Walker Programs | | 16 | 5 |
| I. Oxford Summer Program | | | 5 |
| J. St. Michael's Tutorial Program | | | 6 |
| K. Summer Camp Scholarships | | | 12 |

Summary of Elementary Counselors Activities

| Type of Meeting | Number Held |
|---|---|
| 1. Individual Counseling Sessions | 819 |
| 2. Group Counseling Sessions | 60 |
| 3. Home Visitations | 104 |
| 4. Case Conference—Involving two or more of the following: parents, teachers, social workers, principals, vice-principals | 236 |
| 5. Individual Parent Conferences | 252 |
| 6. Individual Teacher Conferences | 616 |
| 7. Business and Industry Meetings | 1 |
| 8. Community Meetings—Outside the School | 17 |
| 9. Guidance Assemblies | 34 |
| 10. Group Guidance Classes | 58 |

**Future of the Movement**

The position of elementary guidance counselor in the Hartford Public Schools has definitely been established and is well accepted in those schools where it is part of the educational program. However, to hope for a fully developed elementary guidance program in the next year is somewhat unrealistic. Problems of funding and personnel have to be resolved.

Funds from NDEA should help finance an elementary guidance program for the first three years. Some work has to be done by the institutions of higher education to develop programs leading to certification as an elementary school counselor.

In summary, it is felt that, if we are to meet the needs of Hartford youngsters, we have to continue to develop our guidance services both on a corrective and developmental basis until we are able to provide a guidance program for all K-12 children.

*PERSON-TO-PERSON PROGRAM*

*Chief aim of New Milford's elementary guidance program is to help each child develop his full potential. Pictured below are typical scenes in the person-to-person program. Top, principal (left) and guidance specialists hold conference. Bottom, counselor leads conversation development session with second and third graders.*

# New Milford

## *Heart of the Program Is Counseling*

By Stanley J. Setear

**Background**

There is little argument about the need for elementary school guidance. The need has been present ever since the community accepted the goal of increasing the scope and effectiveness of the educational program.

To increase effective teaching in our elementary schools, we need accurate knowledge about the learner. This includes his potential, his interests, and his ambitions. The learner needs a better understanding of himself to improve his sense of self-direction.

Elementary counselors became a reality in New Milford in September 1965. They joined forces with members of school staffs to develop a working relationship appropriately organized to facilitate the successful development of all students.

**Purpose**

With the growth of our school population and proposed building programs, critical attention has been focused on the need for special help for teachers, as well as for children, in child guidance and counseling.

Society all around us gives sufficient evidence of the need for guidance in personal, social, educational, and vocational areas. It is during the early school years that basic attitudes toward learning, school, self, and authority develop. It is then that prevention of serious problems of an educational, emotional, and social nature may most easily be achieved.

Child guidance in the elementary school is, simply, a process of helping each child to discover and develop his potentials to the fullest. The main purpose of such services is to help make sure that every pupil, whether normal or deviant, obtains the maximum opportunity for a successful living experience.

The heart of the guidance program is its counseling services, the person-to-person aspect. Counseling is that part of the guidance program intended to offer a specialist's assistance to another person in increasing the latter's understanding and ability to resolve his problems.

There are many characteristics of the elementary school which make it a favorable beginning place for guidance in our total educational picture. Guidance for young children can be preventative as well as remedial in its approach.

The younger the human being, the more effective and lasting will be any effort to help him with his problems. It has been stated that the influence that may be executed on a five-year-old in one hour's time takes tens, hundreds, or even thousands of hours at age 18.

The remedial function of guidance programs received the greatest emphasis in elementary schools, although it is considered by most authorities to be the least effective of the functions. It is important, therefore, for teachers, counselors, parents and administrators working in a program of guidance to know and understand the developmental patterns of children, so that we are able to distinguish short term upheavals in behavior as part of the regular growing process, or as warning signals that something is really wrong.

If our guidance programs are to be effective, they must be based on the premise that human beings need help—that all persons, regardless of age, have certain basic needs that must and will be met. How they are met will depend on the guidance a person or pupil provides for himself, or on that which is provided for him by someone else.

Young children, understandably, are often too immature to recognize and isolate their problems, much less solve them without the aid of adults. Situations occur in children's lives when it becomes necessary to seek aid in order to make wise decisions. A child can find this aid in school if an effective guidance program is available.

Consequently, a good guidance program must be concerned primarily with the outlooks, insights, attitudes, appreciations, and behavior of pupils in their process of growth and development. We must seek to assist individuals and groups in choosing a line of action, a method of procedure, and a goal.



The elementary school counselor, within the framework of his ability and experience, is responsible for carrying out all pupil personnel services for the boys and girls in grades 1-8.

Specific services performed by the counselor, whose approach to this job is a preventive, developmental program of guidance for all children working under the immediate supervision of the principal, include:

**Work with Children**

1—Appraising Students. Developing and administering a well-integrated program of evaluation.
Studying and interpreting individual differences of students.
Assisting students to clarify their strengths and weaknesses.
Making available corrective services for children with problems that are within the scope of training, experiences, and time of counselor.

2—Counseling. Counseling on group and individual basis with students, parents, and teachers. Identifying students with special learning problems and providing needed counseling.
Coordinating referral services through the appropriate channels for the benefit of pupils needing more specialized help.

3—Scheduling and Planning. Assisting with scheduling of students when selective planning and placement is appropriate. Consulting with teachers and administrators as they consider individual differences in determining curriculum offerings, organizational plans, and special groupings. Interpreting curriculum to pupils, parents, and the community.

**Work with Teachers**

The counselor assists the teacher in:

1—Meeting the educational, personal, and social needs of all pupils.

2—Sensitizing them to the needs of all children for affection, security, and self-worth.

3—Developing resource materials and community resources for his use in the area of child development, vocational, and educational guidance.

4—Working with other teachers and administrators in providing inservice training for staff in these guidance areas.

5—Interpreting and using test results.

6—Increasing his skill in identifying students for appropriate referral.

7—Conducting and cooperating in research studies in such areas as testing, follow-up, and pupil evaluation.

**Work with Parents**

The counselor assists the parent in:

1—Bettering adjustment of their children to school.

2—Developing workshops for parents.

3—Making digests of appropriate literature for parents to read and study.

4—Helping parents to understand the normal developmental pattern of children.

5—Understanding the nature and purpose of the guidance program.

6—Scheduling individual conferences on the progress and problems of the child, and in making more understandable, and easier to accept, referrals for special care.

**Other Duties**

The elementary school guidance counselor is not concerned with administering disciplinary punishments to pupils. He performs the functions of a faculty member in the normal course of a school day in maintaining respectful and cooperative behavior in the halls, on school grounds, and wherever pupils may be. But teachers do not send discipline problems to him for punishment.

Instead, potential problem children are identified, whenever possible, before trouble occurs. Cases are discussed by the teacher and the counselor with prevention in mind. When a serious disciplinary breach does occur, the teacher follows established regulations in seeking assistance from the principal.

If disciplinary action is required, the principal may want the counselor to confer with the child and his parents later to discuss the situation in order to prevent further occurrences.

The elementary school counselor assumes some responsibility in attendance services. A primary objective of these services is to insure regular attendance of pupils who should be in school. A second concern is to see that all pupils who are unable to participate in the regular school program because of mental, physical, or emotional handicaps are properly exempted and that they participate in educational programs appropriate to their needs.

The elementary school counselor makes home visits when necessary in the performance of his duties.

He cooperates with all schools in an effort to provide a smooth movement of pupils from one school to another.

In terms of specific operational planning in the area of educational guidance early in the year, the guidance counselor assists each teacher in making a study of the guidance needs of individual pupils.

The guidance counselor reviews with the teacher the student cumulative record folders, including health records, and the records of reading and speech remediation. The guidance counselor then helps the teacher plan for individual students, especially where there are needs for further challenge, for the slow, average, and above-average child, for extending remedial work into the classroom, for coordinating with the health program, for classroom help on personal-social adjustment, and for an approach to other problems which may be revealed.

These plans are put into writing on a guidance planning sheet for those individual students in need of special guidance planning. Evaluation of progress, with written comments and statements of further planning, is made from time to time as needed, and systematically near the end of the school year.

**Problems**

Determining the effectiveness of guidance services at the elementary level. Evaluation is carried out for many reasons. They vary from the harsh reality that we evaluate because we are told we must, to the wholesome realization that evaluation is an important part of the process of education.

A good evaluation can help improve our work in several important ways. Our forward-looking school system has repeatedly attempted to build sound evaluations into all of our school plans and educational programs. This objective is still strongly encouraged, as this preliminary approach to evaluating guidance attests.

We sincerely hope this evaluation will uncover valuable information for our own use. We believe this is the main criterion to look at when we are trying to decide what we are attempting to do. Since we are all working on different levels, the people who are going to benefit from this endeavor are the other counselors you work with and yourselves.

Preparation of Elementary Counselors. It is difficult to realistically and objectively suggest training content until the position itself emerges in a clearcut

manner and until the functions of the worker become more clearly defined.

The Role of the Counselor—Distribution of Time. Our purpose was to use the counselor as a facilitative agent in a school assigned to work with all pupils. However, as this guidance role concept was introduced into the schools and in order to communicate helpfulness and facilitation to teachers, it was found that the counselor was spending a higher percentage of time working with individuals who had special needs and who needed to be referred to other specialists.

Care should be used to make certain that the proposed role of the counselor is implemented.

Informing Parents About Counseling. It helps if parents understand that guidance is not "nosiness" but a very special kind of caring on the part of the school in behalf of their youngsters.

**Future of the Movement**

Elementary school guidance is emerging as a unique guidance function. It is rapidly becoming recognized as a needed basic school service.

A general lack of research and experience in programs in operation tends to leave the development of elementary guidance programs unrestricted as to approaches being used.

Programs in elementary school guidance will surely be developed and identified in the next few years. If the public schools wish to influence these programs, it will be necessary to begin studying and planning for local programs and to design long-range studies to evaluate their effectiveness.

*SERVES ALL PUPILS*

*Ridgefield now has a full-time counselor in each of its six elementary schools. Each works directly with children in cooperation with the school principal, teachers, and other pupil personnel specialists.*

*Above, counselor (standing) confers with teachers in elementary school. Left, same counselor takes notes on pupil behavior in a classroom at the request of the teacher.*

# Ridgefield

## *Guidance Services Are Continuous*

By Muriel E. Haitsch

**Background**

The position of elementary counselor was established in Ridgefield in September 1961 and made responsible for guidance in the two elementary schools in the town. Previously, the school psychologist had served the entire system, kindergarten through grade 12. He continued to provide psychological services and to serve as department head.

Thereafter, with the opening of each new elementary school, an elementary counselor was added. By 1964-65, the concept of elementary-counselor-psychological examiner was accepted by the Ridgefield board of education. Each counselor was trained and certified to function in both areas. At the beginning of the 1967-68 school year, each of the four schools had its own counselor-examiner.

**Purpose**

The philosophy of guidance holds that guidance services should be continuous, beginning when the child enters kindergarten and following him until he completes grade 12.

Guidance in the elementary school assists all pupils directly and indirectly through their teachers and parents in making the maximum use of their abilities for their own development and for the good of society. It emphasizes the early recognition of intellectual, emotional, and physical strength and weakness. It encourages the development of talents, helps prevent conditions which interfere with learning, and facilitates the early use of available resources to meet the needs of children.

Efforts then are directed towards prevention of learning problems, assessment of academic strengths and weaknesses, and remediation of specific learning difficulties. Such measures require active participation by teachers, school administrators, and parents.

Not only does the elementary school guidance program help children who have minor and temporary troubles—and that means every child at one time or another—but it also influences activities which affect every child. The concept of one counselor-examiner per building permits not only early identification but also programing and follow-up on a consistent basis. Such identification, intervention and follow-up are essential in giving truly effective service to all children. Thus, the counselor-examiner, as a member of the staff in each elementary school, consults with pupils, teachers, and parents. He works with the principal in coordinating the special services so as to provide the most effective educational program for each child.

**Specific Duties**

The counselor-examiner is well integrated into the whole school program and is actively engaged in working with children, teachers, principals, and parents, giving them direct services with problems and concerns. In addition, certain specific responsibilities have been established.

The careful placement of children in the appropriate class can often prevent them from experiencing academic and other problems. The counselor-examiner is responsible for the review of records and the testing of each new child before placement within a grade level. Conferences are then held with the teacher and the parents to further their understanding and to gain their cooperation.

Equal consideration is given to the placement of children already in the system. This includes setting up classes for each new school year, as well as possible retentions and changes in grouping within a grade level during the school year. In each situation, the counselor-examiner reviews all records, provides individual testing if needed, and discusses pertinent information with teachers and the principal before any decisions are made. Parents are also involved as well as the receiving teacher so that needed cooperation to best help the child will be provided. In this way, a group decision is made that will help each child progress toward optimal development in the most appropriate school environment.

The counselor-examiner is responsible for carrying out the system wide testing program within his building. He provides essential materials and provides teachers with the necessary orientation in the administrating and recording of tests. More important, however, is the evaluation and interpretation of test results for the teachers. This includes not only system, school, and class performance, but the use of item analysis in meeting class and individual needs. The counselor-examiner also assumes responsibility for all test make ups, as well as retesting for the evaluation of pupil progress. Frequently, the counselor-examiner meets with parents to further their understanding and interpretation of test results.

The counselor-examiner is continually involved in consultative services to pupils, teachers, principals, parents, and other professionals within the school system and community. Such effort is on an individual or a group basis. And it is always pointed toward helping further the understanding and interpretation of behavior characteristics and developmental patterns of children. While the emphasis is often on an individual child, the principal often uses the counselor-examiner as part of his general in service teacher training program. In addition, teachers frequently consult with the counselor-examiner on their own to gain further information and understanding regarding children with special learning or emotional problems. This easy free flow of communication between professionals involved with children has done much to increase the effectiveness of the elementary guidance program in this system.

The counselor-examiner is taking an active part in the early identification and prevention of learning disabilities, with special emphasis on children at the kindergarten and first-grade level. The counselor-examiner and the principal orient teachers to programs of training for children with potential learning disabilities and work to adapt kindergarten and primary programs to better meet specific needs of certain children. Individual evaluations are provided for children who appear to have serious or continuing learning problems. The counselor-examiner also assists in providing parents with information regarding such problems.

The counselor-examiner, too, helps to identify older children who require special education. He places special emphasis on perceptual problems. This year, the counselor-examiners from each building, working cooperatively with principals, have established identification criteria, including physical and developmental background, social history, and individual test results. Parents, teacher, school nurse, social worker, medical doctor—all are involved in obtaining this information. A school personnel team then helps to establish the needs and best placement of the child. This may include a class for the mentally retarded, a regular class with special help—i.e., speech, reading help—or placement in the class for children with learning disabilities.

As this latter program of identification and placement is new in the Ridgefield school system, the counselor-examiners have worked with principals in organizing and receiving materials for the class, orienting the staff as well as the parents to the goals of the program and being available to expedite program implementation. Particular emphasis is placed on helping parents understand the nature of the learning disability with which their children are trying to cope. The counselor-examiner works closely at all times with the principal in any area he requests. Again, this close cooperation is most helpful to children and contributes to the success of the program.

The counselor-examiner also works closely with the principal and teachers in curriculum study and revision. This function includes standardized test interpretation, identification of academic areas which seem in need of special emphasis, and helping to adjust curriculum goals to fit the needs of individual children.

Within each building, other responsibilities may be assigned the counselor-examiner by the principal to further the elementary guidance program. These include orientation of new school personnel, assisting in the planning of homebound instruction when needed, planning for children with physical problems (temporary or long term), and conducting orientation activities between grade six and the junior high level.

In conclusion, it must be pointed out that much of the acceptance of and cooperation with the counselor-examiner has resulted largely from concern by principals for children and from their strong support of the elementary guidance program.

**Administration Problems**

In a fast-growing town and school system, communication becomes increasingly difficult. Full staff meetings are time consuming, while written communications become impersonal and may be interpreted in various ways. A combination of both methods has proved most effective. But communication remains a problem.

As the director of pupil personnel services also became assistant superintendent in charge of recruitment, his time became limited for the functioning of the department. Although a department head of secondary guidance, junior and senior high, was added, no specific provision was made for direction at the elementary level. However, since the counselor-examiners were experienced and had some longevity in the system, the program continued to function well.

**Evaluation**

The concept of one counselor-examiner per building has been one of the strongest points of the elementary program. This has made the counselor-examiner a member of the staff in each elementary school—a person who is easily able to work with and consult with the principal, teachers, pupils, and parents.

The cooperation and interest of the elementary principals in the program has helped its growth and effectiveness during the past years.

**Future of the Movement**

A change in school administration somewhat changed the structure of the guidance department for the 1968-69 school year. Elementary counselors serve two schools. An increase in social workers is planned, and psychological testing will be provided by a psychologist or psychological examiner.

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**NOTE:** *Since Mrs. Haitsch wrote the preceding description of elementary school guidance in Ridgefield, a number of changes have been made in the program. In the following pages, John B. Phillips, Director of Special Services, explains the major changes and takes a look at possible future developments.*

# *Ridgefield Counselor Fills New Role*

By John B. Phillips

Today in Ridgefield, the elementary school counselor performs roles as: (1) A sound applier and interpreter of child development, (2) An effective consultant with administrators, teachers, and other faculty members, (3) An effective collaborator with parents, (4) An effective counselor of children and (5) An effective applied research worker.

Since 1968, two new elementary schools have opened, bringing the total to six. The duties of the elementary school counselor have changed. Because of the turnover of counselor-examiners and the shortage of counselor-examiners, each elementary school now has a half-time school counselor. The counselor is not a psychological examiner. A school psychologist provides special psychological testing and consultative services to the elementary schools in addition to providing such services to the high school. One of the school social workers is assigned to serve the elementary schools. The 1970-71 school budget provides for a further development of elementary school guidance. It is planned to have a full-time school counselor in each of the six elementary schools.

**Counselor Responsibilities**

The elementary school counselor serves as a consultant to the school principal and the teachers. He:

1. Assists in the annual grouping of pupils for the next school year.

2. Participates in case conferences regarding pupils who exhibit severe problems.

3. Assists teachers in understanding pupils and in identifying pupils who may need special help.

4. Serves as a consultant to the staff in the school curriculum development and improvement.

5. Holds individual and group conferences with teachers regarding problem pupils and teaching-learning situations.

6. Serves as a resource person for new teachers to assist them in understanding the school, the staff, the pupils, and the community.

The elementary school counselor serves as an advisor. He:

1. Works with pupils on an individual basis in groups concerning their educational progress and their personal and social development.

2. Assists in the orientation and placement of new pupils through pupil and parent conferences, appropriate testing, and analysis of records and conferences with the principal and teachers.

The counselor serves as a collaborator with parents. He:

1. Has conferences with parents to assist them in understanding their children's progress in school.

2. Has conferences with parents to enable them and the school to have a better understanding of the children.

3. Has conferences with parents to interpret the school program.

The counselor assists in orientation. He:

1. Helps the school provide orientation programs for prospective kindergarten children and their parents.

2. Works with junior high school personnel in providing orientation activities for sixth-graders who will advance to the junior high school.

The counselor does testing. He:

1. Coordinates in the standardized group testing program for the school, including scheduling tests, orienting teachers, and collecting tests for scoring.

2. Assists the principal in distributing the results of tests to the teachers and in interpreting the results to them.

3. Analyzes test results and confers with the principal on the curriculum implications of the results for the school program.

4. Assists the school in reporting test results to parents.

5. Gives appropriate individual tests to pupils as the need arises.

6. Gives appropriate tests to new prospective kindergarten and first-grade pupils at special registration periods and as they register individually.

The counselor arranges for homebound instruction for individual pupils who need it and follows homebound instruction to its completion.

He follows the school progress of pupils to identify those who may have serious difficulties.

He serves as a member of the pupil personnel services team. In this capacity, he:

1. Works with the principal, teachers, and pupil personnel services specialists in presenting severe problem pupil cases to the Elementary School Planning and Placement Team for Special Education.

2. Works with pupil personnel services specialists in providing a team approach to bring appropriate special services and special education to those pupils who have been judged as needing it. (One elementary school counselor serves as a permanent member of the Elementary School Planning and Placement Team for Special Education.)

**Future of Elementary Guidance in Ridgefield**

The 1970-71 budget provides for a full-time counselor for each elementary school. With each school having a full-time counselor instead of a half-time counselor, the counselor-pupil ratio will be reduced from 1:1100 to 1:550. The reduction in counselor-pupil ratio will bring the ratio in line with recognized recommendations and will enable the counselor to become a more effective member of the school faculty.

It is hoped that the problem of counselor turnover can be reduced. Of

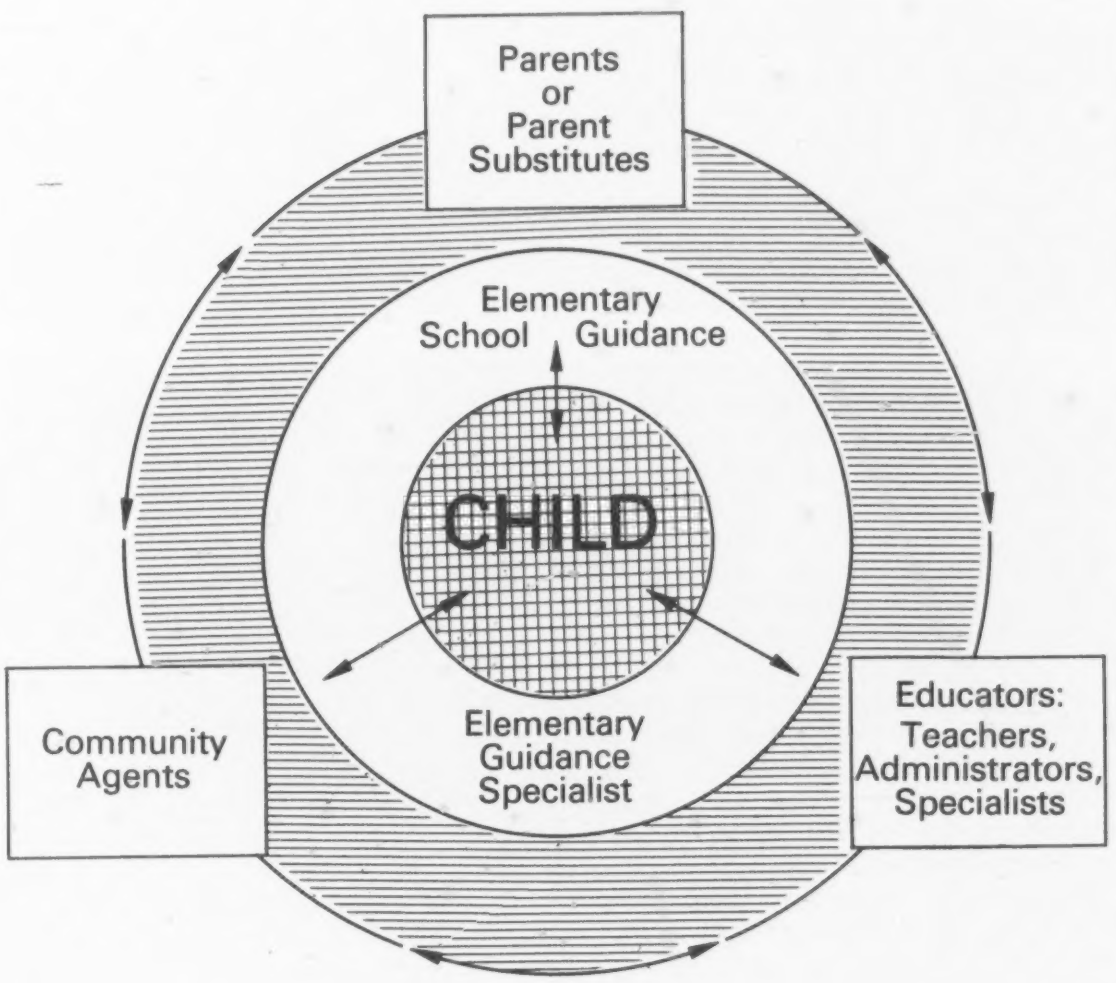
the four elementary school counselors, two are completing their second year in the school system and the other two are finishing their first year. If longevity can be built up in elementary school guidance with competent counselors, the effectiveness of the guidance program should increase. It is also hoped that some men can be added to the guidance program. All of the counselors are women. The lack of men in elementary school education is becoming a problem, especially in the education of upper elementary school-age children.

The Director of Special Services serves as both the Director of Professional Personnel and the Director of Pupil Personnel Services. Since an administrative assistant has been hired to work part-time in the Department of Professional Personnel, the Director of Special Services should be able to serve more effectively as Director of *Pupil Personnel* Services. He should be able to coordinate better the elementary school guidance program. Hopefully, the program will show continued development and improvement.

Additional personnel will be greatly needed in the immediate future in psychological testing. Since the counselors are not psychological examiners, the pupil referrals for specialized individual psychological testing are being handled by the school psychologist. The school psychologist serves the six elementary schools and the high school. His case load is too high. The problem should be remedied by hiring an additional school psychologist or a psychological examiner to assist him.

At the present time, one school social worker serves all six elementary schools. In the future, possibly, additional school social worker services will be needed as the work of the counselors and social workers on the special education cases becomes greater and more complex.

# Elementary Guidance In Connecticut



# Skeletal Model for Elementary School Guidance

Slowly but surely, elementary guidance has evolved from its rather timid and indecisive beginnings into a concept which can be described and categorized. This is not to say the development is complete but that the blurry image which elementary guidance has projected in the past is now becoming sharply defined.

The philosophical bases on which the movement rests are referred to in the introduction: Elementary guidance has become a means of delivering preventive and developmental services to all children through an enabling process devoted to meeting basic human needs. For every child, the ultimate goal is the development of a positive self-image, social and emotional maturity, and academic achievements in line with intellectual potential.

**Rationale**

The skeletal model presented here and depicted on page 44 is built on the following principles:

1—The public schools must provide an education for responsible living which demands preparation for eventual employment and citizenship, adaptability to changing conditions, and the assumption of family responsibilities. To do this, education must modify itself to meet the individual needs of children.

2—Guidance is a process which makes effective use of home, school, and community resources in meeting the individual needs of children.

3—One of the most delicate and pressing needs in the provision of services to children is the coordination of efforts of all involved persons—parents, teachers, administrators, pupil personnel specialists, and community representatives, including individual citizens, agencies, and organizations.

4—The ultimate goal of education is the production of a self-directed problem-solver. This assumes the necessity of providing appropriate experiences which will aid the development of self-direction, both in academic learning and in behavior. Academic knowledge is relatively useless to an individual who cannot control his own behavior and emotions. Self-direction also assumes the development of a satisfying and defensible personal value system as a basis for meeting life's problems.

5–Good statements of philosophy become translated into good action programs only as needs can be adequately presented and support effectively generated. Implementation requires the coordinated and combined efforts of all interested and informed individuals. In order for meaningful programs to be generated which reflect the philosophy of individual learning, an impact must be made upon the curriculum through curriculum teams and upon financial resources through administrators, boards of education, and boards of finance or city councils.

**Elementary Guidance Role (Function)**

As indicated in the schematic model, the three functions generally performed within the guidance role–coordination, consultation, counseling–frequently merge in practice.

1–Coordination (Working Relationships). One of the most demanding aspects in the performance of the guidance role is the necessity of building meaningful relationships among a great variety of persons. A major part of guidance work consists in focusing the efforts and attention of many child-related people on the total educational process.

The key person in this process has been, is now, and will continue to be the teacher. Since he works directly with pupils for a major portion of each school day, his influence on the child is crucial and his contribution to the total guidance process is critical. In a real sense, the place where the guidance process becomes localized and concentrated is the classroom.



From an educational point of view, the efforts of all other significant persons portrayed in the schematic diagram are directed toward aiding the teacher in the education process. The elementary school counselor is expected to coordinate these efforts effectively.

2–Consultation. The elementary guidance worker is expected through training and experience to have developed an expertise in the accumulation and interpretation of data in the field of child development in order properly to qualify as a consultant to parents, community representatives, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel.

To fulfill this role, it is assumed that he will be highly competent in the areas of measurement and evaluation, education psychology, individual and group guidance, learning disabilities, and research techniques. In performing this role, he frees the administrator to administer, the teacher to teach, and fellow pupil personnel specialists to practice their specialty.

At the same time, he recognizes the necessity of utilizing the knowledge and skills of these other educators in carrying out the consultative role. One of his major contributions in this role is to provide an impact on curriculum as part of the curriculum-development team.

Ultimately, he serves as an advocate of total educational planning—behavioral, emotional, and academic. In this way, he acknowledges the necessity of providing a broad education which leads to self-understanding, personal development, and social responsibility, as well as academic achievement.

3—Counseling. Although teachers, administrators, and other pupil personnel specialists frequently and properly exercise a counseling function, the elementary guidance specialist should be thoroughly equipped to serve as a counselor to parents and children. The performance of this professional role assumes a rigorous undergirding of psychological training and experience.

Such training and experience should ensure the child and parent that genuine professional concern and help are available to him. Training and experience in counseling techniques should also be useful in helping other school personnel carry out their particular counseling roles better.

# Thanks . . .

Many persons have contributed to the preparation of this publication. The Advisory Committee on Elementary School Guidance Services in Connecticut wishes to thank the many elementary school principals throughout the state who responded most cooperatively to its request for information on counseling services in their schools.

Although not a member of the advisory committee, Joseph W. Constantine graciously contributed the excellent description of Hartford's elementary guidance program.

Several members of the professional staff of the State Department of Education assisted ably in processing data generated by the committee's inquiries. Other persons offered valuable suggestions for the strengthening of the final draft.

—Henry F. Drewniany

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